71 50 24

Make a Fabric Mask to ward off Dust, Viruses and whatnots

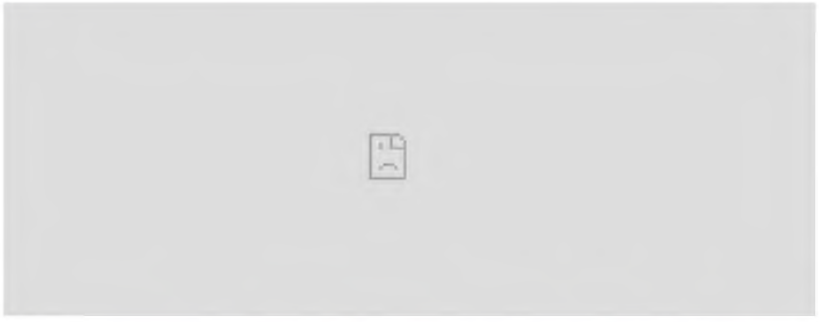
Everyone is scared out of their minds. Even the invincible James Bond is scared. I am too. And all those WhatsApp forwards and news articles, and facebook recommendations are not helping. I am talking about the new Virus going around and the fear of an impending pandemic spreading like wild fire, taking lives in its wake.

Every one is getting paranoid about germs and pathogens and want some sort of protection against them. Can masks do that?.

When my husband reached a shop to buy masks, the place was so crowded with people clamoring to buy masks that the whole purpose of buying it would have been defeated getting into that crowd and contracting whatever we are running away from within that crowd itself.

There is an unprecedented demand for masks all over the world.

Disposable Surgical masks can prevent infection from spreading around. But the disposable masks can only be used once and needs to be discarded many times over (6 hours use maximum) the same day.



Masks as protection "works if the mask is changed regularly and disposed of hygienically and safely. In surgery, doctors must change their mask at least every two hours. If, on the other hand, a mask of this type is worn repeatedly, it quickly loses its effectiveness." says this website.

Fabric masks trumps over disposables here. The fabric masks can

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be washed and used. But the downside is that the surgical masks are more effective. The ones with filters are even better.

My husband managed to buy some surgical masks from the shop. But I decided to sew some masks from fabric – just as a precaution. What if we outlive the masks.

Best Fabric suitable for making masks

You may use **100% cotton fabric (tightly woven) or a Nylon tricot material (mesh type)**. Use two layers of fabric for more effectiveness. I think a good quality Nylon is a tightly woven fabric that wouldn't let anything pass through its holes. But there is the problem of breathability.

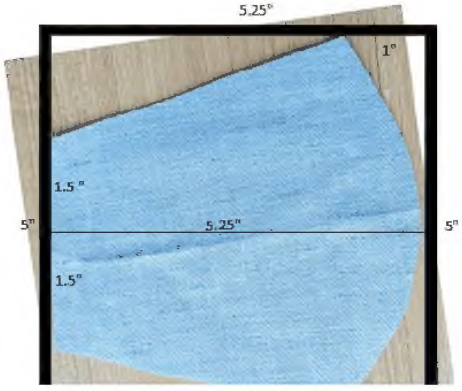
I am making it with **cotton toweling fabric**. Alternatively, you can make them from **fabric scraps of old cotton-blend t-shirts or cotton fabric used for towels with a waffle weave.** This article suggests using Vinyl and foam for making masks for health professionals.

This article suggests using non-woven interfacing as an inside layer.

Read this article on the effectiveness of face masks in preventing viral infections. The article says that "they could help lower the risk of contracting a virus through the "splash" from a sneeze or a cough and provide some protection against hand-to-mouth transmissions" and if you have the virus, you wouldn't be spreading it around.

You can find simple tutorials to make fabric masks very easily from whatever cotton fabric you have at home.

Make a contoured Mask



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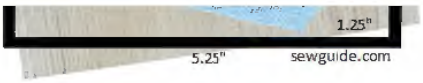
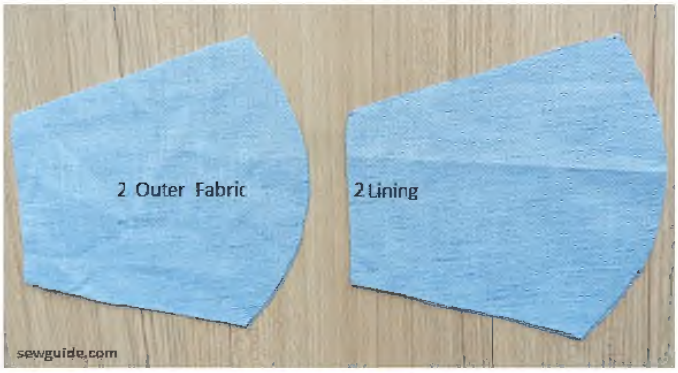
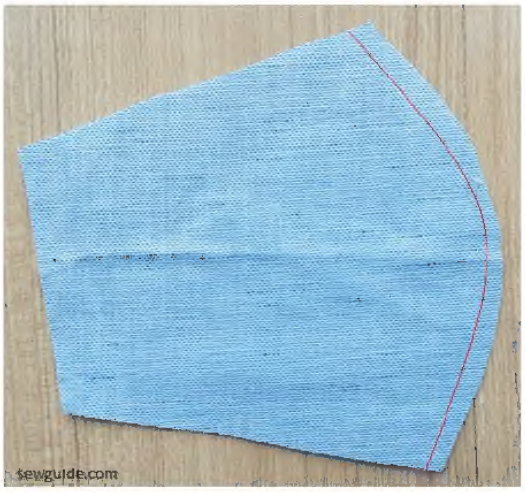


To make this mask you need to cut out 4 fabric pieces -2 from the outer fabric and 2 from the lining.



Keep the two outer fabric pieces rightsides together and join them along the curved edge . Do the same for the lining fabric as well.



You get two fabric pieces like this.

Clip the seam allowances at regular intervals so that it turns smoothly. Press the seam as well.

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Keep outer mask piece infront of you, rightside up.

Take 5 inch long elastic pieces 2 numbers. Keep it along the side edges and stitch in place with hand sewing needle and thread. (You can use ties instead of elastic)

On top of this, keep the lining mask piece, right side down.

Sew all along the outer edges (the elastic pieces are enclosed inside); leave 2 inch space unstitched. Red line in the picture is the stitching line.

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Bring the right side of the mask out through the unstitched portion.

Top stitch along the outer edge, in the process sewing the unstitched portion closed.

How to make a flat Fabric Mask

Cut out the fabric pieces – you need the center mask fabric, two strips to bind the sides and then the strap. Cut the long strap from fabric on the bias. Here is a tutorial on making bias strips and also for binding with bias strips.

Use simple back stitches to hand sew if you do not have a sewing machine.

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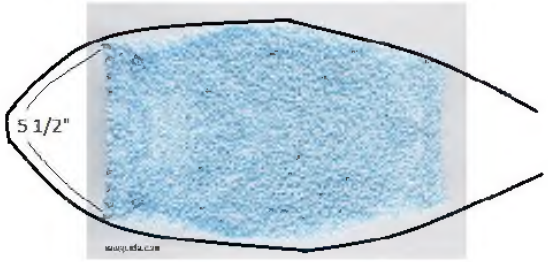
Bind the side edges.

Fold and stitch the short edges of the long bias strip 1/4 inch to the inside.

Now this long strip is used to bind the mask fabric.The strip is to be arranged as in the picture below.



With the long bias strip, start binding the top and bottom edge, with the straps measuring 5 1/2 inches on either side.

Finish stitching the strap on either side.

Join the short edges together at one side – overlap the edges and stitch in place. Isn't it easy enough ?

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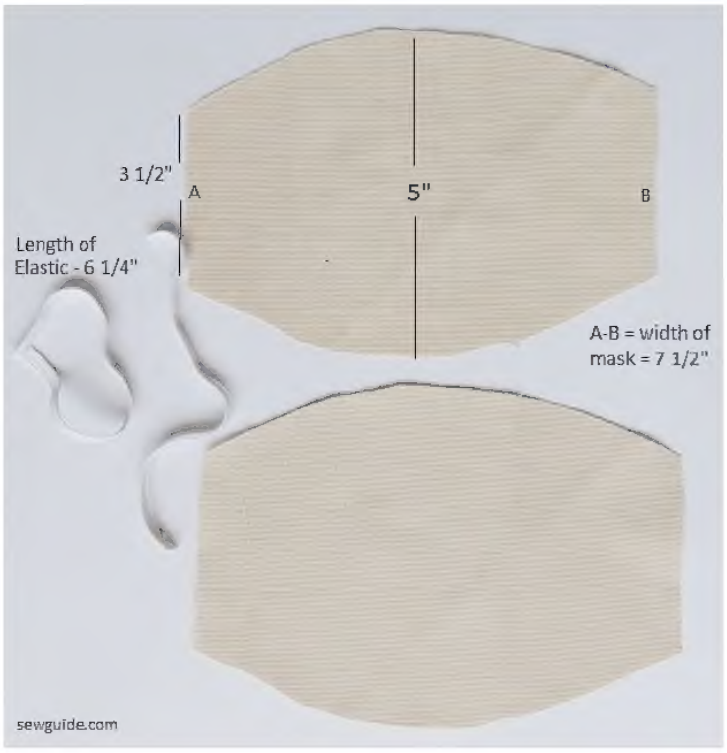
If you are a novice at sewing and cannot be bothered about binding and stuff, just add extra allowances at the sides and top and bottom edges as you cut and turn under the edges and stitch. Then use thin elastic as straps on either sides. The steps are as follows.

Cut out 2 fabric pieces and 2 pieces of elastic of width 1/8 inch, length 6 1/4 inch.



Keep one of the fabric pieces right side up in front of you.

Keep the elastic pieces on either sides of the fabric as in the picture below. Baste stitch in place – use a hand sewing needle and thread to stitch it there.

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- TOTE BAG : HERE IS THE

Keep the other piece of fabric, right side down on top of this, as in the picture below. Ensure that the elastic is sandwiched inside, not peeking out.

Now sew the whole thing shut along the edge (with 1/4 inch seam allowance) except for a 2 inch gap. The red line in the picture below is the stitching line. Use hand stitches (stem stitch or back stitch)

Turn the whole thing out through the gap you have left unstitched.

BEST WAY TO MAKE THIS EVERY DAY BAG

▹ PATCHWORK : 10 BEST METHODS OF JOINING FABRIC PIECES TOGETHER EFFICIENTLY

Fold the edges at the unstitched portion to the inside. Top stitch the whole edge, in the process closing the gap shut.

You can use a hand stitch like ladder stitch to sew the hole shut.

Alternatively, you can use your surgical mask as a pattern.

No Sew Mask – If you would rather not sew at all, or you do not have any elastic as strap, here is an easy way to convert a sock into a fast and easy mask. I saw it as a video forward and it is a very clever hack.

Cut out a rectangular piece from your sock – from the leg portion or the feet portion.

Cut up from the folded edges as in the picture below – this cut portion will serve as the facemask straps.

Use as a mask – you can insert another cotton fabric piece or tissue inside the fold of the socks mask to make it foolproof.

My husband always teases that I am getting my degree at the 'Whatsapp university' and I do agree that I enjoy all those forwards (mostly utterly pointless) on WhatsApp. But a few of them are really useful. The gist of information on preventing virus infection that I got from these forwards are as follows:

In the midst of a viral outbreak you are better off **washing your hands frequently** and lathering on sanitizer (with 60% or more alchohol content) and **not touching nose and mouth** and **not going out in the crowd** unless absolutely necessary than just wearing face masks.

Masks help in one very important way – it makes us touch our nose and mouth less frequently. Actually, touching eyes, nose and mouth with contaminated hands is the most dangerous thing in spreading the germs.

To use the masks properly, **wash hands before donning the mask and after removing the mask**. Ensure that the mask is covering your nose and mouth effectively. And **remove the mask from the behind**, to avoid touching nose or mouth.

Masks should be used along with protective goggles. Eyes also need protection.

Disinfect your phone screens and laptops and do not share them with others, if possible.

When using ATM, public computers, gadgets, door knobs, lift buttons, switches, railings and other things that others would have touched wipe the surface if possible with tissue soaked in sanitizer before touching or use a toothpick to operate and then discard; Or you can use some protection like gloves and wash hands with soap before touching your nose, mouth or anyone else.

before touching your nose, mouth or anyone else.

As per WHO, you need to wear a mask only if you are showing symptoms of the virus or you are near some one infected with the virus. WHO is also urging people not to hoard surgical masks and waste them unnecessarily because if the infection becomes widespread there will be a shortage of masks for those that desperately need them.

And do not panic. This too shall pass.

Wash the fabric masks frequently in the washing machine keeping them inside a laundry bag (to avoid damaging the elastic) or Handwash the fabric masks, with detergent and disinfectant. Checkout this post on How to Disinfect your clothes.

Read WHO advisory on corona virus (Covid19) here. And more details about facemasks here

List of Water proof /water repellent fabric

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Comments 19

Carol Mullen
APRIL 1 2020 AT 2:23 AM

[illegible] a pattern where we could hand sew the mask. Thank you

Reply

Sarina

APRIL 1, 2020 AT 7:59 AM

Hi Carol
Most of the things that you sew with a sewing machine can be sewn with a hand sewing needle and thread with simple hand sewing stitches - you can sew back stitches which makes the neatest straight stitch. Check out these posts on hand sewing stitches

Reply

Kim

MARCH 31, 2020 AT 8:12 PM

Surgical style masks such as these can be effective for reducing the spray of a cough, sneeze or just normal speech from an infected person. They will not protect from viruses entering the airways though as those are adhering themselves to water vapor as small as 5µm (microns).

If you feel safer wearing one, I say do it, but there is also an increased risk of touching your face to adjust the mask and bringing viral particles to your mouth, nose or eyes. These are the reasons WHO is telling healthy people not to wear them.

Be careful. Wash wash wash.

Reply

post author

Sarina

APRIL 1, 2020 AT 11:11 AM

Hi Kim
What you said makes so much sense. Touching the masks with hands which have touched contaminated surfaces is a risk that many may unknowingly be taking. At this trying times, you cannot be too careful. Stay safe.

Reply

Amina

MARCH 17, 2020 AT 11:28 PM

Hi Sarina, this is such a helpful article at this time . Will surely try to make one. Thankyou

Reply

post author

Sarina

MARCH 17, 2020 AT 11:37 PM

Thanks for leaving the comment. Are you working from home? Stay safe.

Reply

Catherine Barron

MARCH 15, 2020 AT 1:23 AM

Hello,
Thank you for posting information, as well as the tutorial for making a reusable dust mask. I was thinking about possibly adding an additional layer in the middle.

What are your thoughts on using interfacing (the thin, fibrous, sew in (NOT GLUE backed) types? It may stop some dust particles that made it through the outer layer. I would really like to hear your thoughts on this idea, to see if I was on the right track.

Thank you again, and stay well.

Catherine Barron

Reply

post author

Sarina

MARCH 15, 2020 AT 8:05 AM

Hi Catherine,
You can add more layers – Definitely woven sew-in interfacing, not nonwoven fusible one. Why don't you use another fabric layer?. Thanks for writing the comment. Take care

Reply

Lynn

APRIL 1, 2020 AT 10:57 PM

why not fusible interfacing for dust masks?

Reply

post author

Sarina

APRIL 2, 2020 AT 11:21 AM

Hi Lynn
The fusible has a gum on it , right? You also need to breathe and be comfortable

Reply

Rowan

APRIL 8, 2020 AT 2:33 PM

Fusible is totally brathable, and you actually want nonwoven – smaller gaps for things to slip through – effectiveness tests back this (also hand towel type fabric is one of if not the best fabrics to use.)

Reply

Eilea Princeton

MARCH 14, 2020 AT 11:22 PM

Thanks so much Sarina for taking the time to provide this to the world. I'm sending you 2 files as attchments to a reply to this email as I've not figured out how to attach to a comment. One file is for a cloth mask c/w pattern from Ageberry.com that uses 2 fabric layers and elastic for the ears . People may find it easier than using bias binding. The other one from Urban Survival.com is for making hand sanitizer from ordinary ingredients. Feel free to share them around. Just give credit where it's due to satisfy the intellectual property rights. Stay well.

Reply

post author

Sarina

MARCH 15, 2020 AT 7:52 AM

Hi Eilea
It is nice of you to write this – I am sure a person reading your comment would want to check out these sites and the tutorials on their own on ageberry.com and urbansurvival.com. Take care

Reply

Linda Craig
MARCH 14, 2020 AT 2:27 AM

Thank you for your helpfulness and concern. You are an inspiration!

Reply

post author

Sarina
MARCH 14, 2020 AT 10:13 AM

Linda, That is so nice of you to say. Thanks for the comment

Reply

Almaz
MARCH 14, 2020 AT 12:30 AM

Thank you very much for your detail information.

Reply

post author

Sarina
MARCH 14, 2020 AT 10:13 AM

Thanks for the comment

Reply

Tammy Ariola
MARCH 13, 2020 AT 10:50 PM

Thank you so much for ALL of the helpful information you pass along.

Reply

post author

Sarina
MARCH 14, 2020 AT 10:14 AM

It is my pleasure. Thanks for the comment. Stay safe.

Reply

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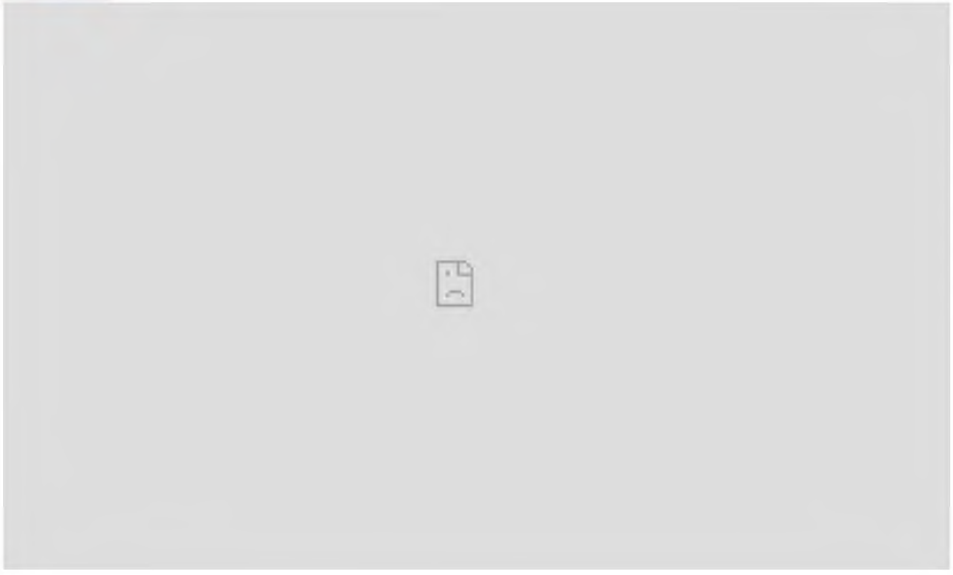

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